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ABSTRACT

"Options in Education" is a radio program which focuses on issues and developments in education. This transcript of the show contains discussions of the guaranteed-student-loan investigation, child abuse, the Experimental and Bilingual Institute in Spanish Harlem, and learning how to tune a piano. Participants in the program include John Merrow and Wendy Blair, moderators; reporter David Ensor and witnesses at recent loan-investigation hearings; Douglas Besharov, from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect; Robert Sequin, of the Washington, D.C., Police Youth Division; Sue Besharov, psychiatric social worker; Vincent deFrancis, of the American Humane Association; Annette Ficker, pediatrician; James H. Lincoln, judge; Maryanne Stein, from the Child Advocacy Center in Washington, D.C.; and Rodriguez Lisboa and Santiago Villa Fanye, of the Experimental and Bilingual Institute. (JM)

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, an electronic weekly magazine devoted to coverage of news, features, policy and people in the field of education, focuses on four topics for the program broadcast during the week of December 1 by most of the 181 member stations of National Public Radio.

The four topics are: "Child Abuse" (Part I) pp 12-24; "Guaranteed Student Loan Investigation" pp 1-11; "A Profile of the Experimental and Bilingual Institute" pp 24-31 and a "Learning To ..." segment on how to tune a piano.

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Options in Education

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

National Public Radio

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

PROGRAM 6

December 1, 1975

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MERROW: This week on Options in Education we learn to tune a piano, I visit a school in spanish harlem...

BLAIR: And I report on the growing problem of child abuse...

MERROW: But first here's David Ensor with a story on a multi million dollar scandal in the government guaranteed student loan program.

ENSOR: Since the late sixties, the government has been guaranteeing loans made by banks and schools to needy students to attend colleges, business and technical schools, promising to cover the loan if the student fails to--and a lot of students do fail. Since 1965, HEW has guaranteed eight billion dollars worth of loans, and with all that money, there were likely to be some problems and there were.

Recent Senate Subcommittee hearings looked into abuses in the Federal Government's Student Loan Program and focused on fraud and bribery charges against an HEW official and a Los Angeles-based chain of privately run trade school. West coast schools incorporated President Fred Peters is accused of bilking the Government of around one million, one hundred thousand dollars, and bribing James Hoffe, Chief Student Loan Officer in HEW's San Francisco Regional Office. Premanent Investigations Subcommittee counsel think Peters did it, and though he was excused from testifying for a bad back, his former wife was there and she came quickly to the point.

Mrs. Peters: I saw ten 100-dollar bills handed to Jim Hoffe. In fact, I was able to count them. I then asked Fred what this was all about and he told me it did not concern me and I should forget all about it. This is the only time I have had any actual knowledge of Fred paying any Government official any money, although, as I will relate later, he told stories about making such payments.

Senator Nunn: Did Fred Peters ever indicate to you that he was really interested in helping to improve the life of minority groups that attended the vocational schools in Los Angeles that he controlled?

Mrs. Peters: He never indicated that to me. He did tell me on occasion that the school was mostly Blacks and Chicanos and he was really pleased about it because that is where the gravy was.

Senator Nunn: That is where what was?

Mrs. Peters: That is where the gravy was.

Senator Nunn: What did you think he meant by "That is where the gravy was"? Did he expand on that?

Mrs. Peters: I knew what he meant. I assumed he meant it was easier to get loans for minority groups than for non-minorities.

Senator Nunn: Miss Peters, from the testimony already developed in these hearings, it would indicate your former husband did live a double life. Prior to your marriage, were you aware that he had a former wife and had fathered four children?

Mrs. Peters: No, I did not know that.

Senator Nunn: Mr. Peters never told you that?

Mrs. Peters: No, he never did.

Senator Nunn: Did you ever have any subsequent conversations with your former husband, Mr. Peters, about this money?

Mrs. Peters: Well, he had told me that he wanted to get something started with HEW so that things would run smoother for him for the loans and that he thought Mr. Hoffey would be prime because his wife thought he wasn't a success and that he should make more money.

Senator Nunn: His wife thought he should make more money?

Mrs. Peters: Yes, and that this would make her happy and it would make Mr. Hoffe happy, too. So, he thought that Mr. Hoffe would be -- you know -- agreeable to a kind of an arrangement to smooth things out for Mr. Peters.

Senator Nunn: To smooth things out with HEW?

Mrs. Peters: Right.

Senator Nunn: In Mr. Peters' dealings with HEW?

Mrs. Peters: Right.

Senator Nunn: Did you have any comment on this?

Mrs. Peters: I agree. I have met Mrs. Hoffe.

ENSOR: Questioned about his alleged dealings with West Coast schools officials, Hoffe had only one answer, which he gave sixteen times, often choking back his emotions.

Mr. Hoffe: Again, I must decline to answer the question on the ground that to do so may tend to incriminate me.

Senator Nunn: Mr. Hoffe, do you know the man who called himself Mr. Fred Peters?

Mr. Hoffe: Okay. I decline to answer the question on the same ground which I stated before.

Senator Nunn: Did you know Mr. Pete Fisher?

Mr. Hoffe: I have the same response.

Senator Nunn: Mr. Hoffe, did you accept a sum of money, $1,000 in $100 dollar bills, from Mr. Fred Peters at his residence in Los Angeles in the summer of 1971?

Mr. Hoffe: I decline to answer the question on the grounds that to do so may tend to incriminate me.

Senator Nunn: Mr. Hoffe, did you meet with Fred Peters, Dave Coremen, and Dan Dameron at the Del Webb Town House in San Francisco in the Fall of 1972?

Mr. Hoffe: I must decline to answer the question on the ground that to do so may tend to incriminate me.

Senator Nunn: Mr. Hoffe, did you agree to accept $1,000 a month plus 60 percent of the profits of that business after expenses in return for your assistance and expertise?

Mr. Hoffe: Again, Mr. Nunn, I must decline to answer the question on the ground that to do so may tend to incriminate me.

ENSOR: James Hoffe, who has just resigned from HEW's Regional Offfice in San Francisco.

So far the hearings may seem to you to have a small time soap opera quality. But, the Subcommittee investigators chose West Coast High School to illustrate a much broader point: that the Federal program to assist low income students to an Education by insuring loans for them has been exceedingly poorly run. Not only have a number of unscrupulous charecters found it easy to rip off the Government, but millions of students have defaulted on loans, forcing the Government to pay up. Senator Sam Nunn, who chaired the hearings estimated that out of the eight billion dollars in loans the Government has guaranteed since the programs started in 1965, over one billion dollars have been defaulted. One witness, a banker who makes loans under the program predicted it would be two billion dollars--or a twenty-five percent default rate when all the books are tallied up for the past decade. The high default rates cannot entirely be blamed on students however.

Mr. Ponce: Mr. Chairman, my name is Enrico E. Ponce. My wife is with me today to help answer any questions that you may have concerning my experience with West Coast Schools. I saw advertisements on television for electronics courses being offered by West Coast Schools and applied to one of its branches, Solar Electronics School, for a course in television repair. I told her that I was interested in taking the program, but that I did not have much money. She told me that I could obtain a Federally-guaranteed loan for the cost of the course which I would not have to begin repaying until nine months after I finished the program.

She also told me that while the application for the loan guarantee to the Federal Government would be for $1,500, that the cost of the course was only $1,280. She told me that I would be paid the difference of $220 after I started the course and the loan had been approved.

Senator Percy: Did that seem odd to you that before, that you start a course of study for your improvement and that you were going to receive $220 in cash? What was your reaction at the time?

Mr. Ponce: My reaction was good because I was in very bad shape at the time.

Senator Percy: This was sort of an irresistible deal.

Mr. Ponce: Yes.

Mrs. Ponce?

Mrs. Ponce: When you are out of money and they tell you they are going to give you $200, when you are broke that feels great. And then coming from the Federal Government, I said, "Go into it. It's good."

Senator Percy: Sure. I mean, after all, it is being given to you by a school accredited by the Federal Government and you have signed a piece of paper.

Mrs. Ponce: They say the Federal Government is going to lend you the money, no problem. We say, "That's good."

Senator Percy: It is a great country.

Mrs. Ponce: You aren't kidding.

Senator Percy: Did you ever get the $220?

Mr. Ponce: Sir?

Senator Percy: Did you ever receive the $220?

Mr. Ponce: No, sir, I never received anything.

ENSOR: What happened to Ponce, happened to many students at West Coast Schools and others. Either through dishonesty or bureaucratic bungling, a student who never took a course and was frequently uneducated and confused, would end up harassed by Collection agents and threatened by the Federal Government.

Ponce said the course was too technical for him and he couldn't understand it, so he quit after two weeks.

Mr. Ponce: Most of the material was well beyond my comprehension. After two weeks of effort I decided to withdraw from the course and notified the school of my action. I of course assumed that the loan would be cancelled when I withdrew. But in early 1973 I was notified by Group Two Equities, Inc., of Los Angeles that West Coast Schools had sold my Federallly-insured loan to the LACSE, Federal Credit Union, and that I should pay the collection agency which was to send me payment coupons for the $1,500. My wife and I visited with officials of the school after receiving these letters and we worked out an agreement whereby I would pay only for the amount of time I actually attended.

In May 1973, I paid West Coast Schools a total of $50.49 to settle the debt. However, shortly thereafter I continued to receive bills and threats from collection agents. My wife received numerous telephone calls and told me that the callers were threatening and abusive. On March 6, 1975, I received a mailgram from the U. S. Office of Education warning me that the Federal Government would move to collect from me for my obligation to LACSE, Federal Credit Union, unless I contacted the lender immediately. Unless I did so it warned the loan would be assigned to the United States of America for collection. This was three years after I thought I had settled the account. However, I continued to ignore the bills and phone calls. I stopped hearing from anyone about the loan but I still live in fear that Federal agents will some day call up my home and ask me to pay a loan.

ENSOR: If Subcommittee Counsel are right, Ponce has little to worry about, as HEW's files are too confused, but they promised to help him if he was contacted for the money. Gregory Lancaster, the Security Pacific National Bank's man in charge of student loans had nothing but scathing sarcasm for HEW's management of the programs.

Mr. Lancaster: We had to develop a formal letter to go to the students to ignore the letter that they received from the United States Government because in many cases, from the time we request the pre-claim assistance to the time that they send it, the customer and the lender have gotten together; we have come up with a solution to the problem. Then HEW sends this pre-claim assistance letter out that says, "We have been informed by your lender, Security Bank, that you have been a bad boy." You can imagine what kind of response we get. I mean we get letters directed to the President of the bank, to the Chairman of the Board, and the names that they can call us you couldn't print.

Senator Nunn: Well, do you think this is a good program? I am not talking about the way it is administered, but I mean the goals of the program and what results you have seen. Is it doing some good? Is it helping the students in general?

Mr. Lancaster: The intent of the program, yes. But I believe that the collection effort by HEW has given the attitude to the students that they really don't have to pay. If you were a student in school and you knew that your predecessors were not paying their loans, why would you start making your loan payments to a bank? I believe that the program is good, but I believe that the administration of the program is very, very bad.

Senator Nunn: Do you think it is because they don't have enough employees in HEW dealing with this program?

Mr. Lancaster: That could be part of it . But I do believe that the employees they have there could work a little harder, could answer requests for information, could give out correct answers. They could get their act together themselves by just issuing a book to us that tells us how to operate. I believe that in Washington, D. C., they do not need an educator and they do not need a lender. They need an administrator. They need someone

that can go out there and ask that staff what they are doing, why they have been receiving complaints. Why do I have to write to Kenneth Cole to get some simple question answered? I can't understand that. And there is no way ---

Senator Nunn: You mean you have given up on the regional level and everything has to come to Washington?

Mr. Lancaster: Well, I give it to everyone. When I write a letter I just copy everyone I can think of and hopefully someone is going to answer me. I have written letters that start out, "Are you deliberately ignoring me?" Personally, I project a $2 billion loss to the United States taxpayer.

Senator Nunn: You believe out of the $8 billion program there is going to be a $2 billion loss?

Mr. Lancaster: I believe that.

Senator Nunn: Twenty-five percent?

Mr. Lancaster: That is correct. I use the figures of John Phillips. He is with the Office of Education and Dr. Phillips said that there is a 25 percent default factor. Twenty-five percent of $8 billion is $2 billion that you and I as taxpayers are going to have to absorb. West Coast Trade Schools, we lent to those students at one time. I ceased lending at the end of 1971. I notified HEW in San Francisco that there was something going on with that school. So, I just said, "no more loans".

Senator Nunn: What made you suspicious of that school?

Mr. Lancaster: The amount of refunds, the amount of customer complaints. We had many, many students that were complaining that the education was poor, that they had dropped out of school.

on the staff. Keep in mind that with this action Congress put us in the loan business in every city and town in the United States. Compare the size of this staff with what any nationwide, billion-dollar business would have out in the private sector. This impossible demand on a small staff must be kept in mind as our performance is appraised and charges of mismanagement and bungling are leveled against us. Before I leave this subject I would like to make what I believe to be a critical point. Much has been made of the high default rate we have been experiencing in this program before the Congress and the press. I certainly respect these criticisms. However, I think we must remember that we are not dealing in the GSL Program with blue-chip borrowers. Rather, we are dealing with some of the worst credit risks a lender sees; young, unemployed persons with few, if any, assets.

On a cumulative basis through February, 1974, 52 percent of the borrowers in the Federal Program came from families with annual adjusted incomes below $6,000. Seventy-nine percent had family incomes less than $12,000. If the purpose of this program is to accomplish certain social aims, I feel we must expect certain default rates. If the risk were not perceived to be greater than lenders are willing to take in their normal operation there would be no need for a government guarantee.

ENSOR: So, banker Gregory Lancaster really more than the illusive Peters or disgraced Hoffey, or the making, taking and faking of loans, the management style and accounting procedures of HEW's Office of Education were on trial in that hearing room. Investigators estimated that West Coast Schools took in over five million dollars between early 1972 and early 1974. But, nobody's sure exactly how much money passed through Peters' hands--for which Subcommittee investigators blame poor record keeping by HEW.

James Hoffe, who is accused of helping keep the schools eligible even after questions were raised by bankers, auditors and others, blamed the alleged frauds and high default rates on lack of direction from Washington. And said they never told him to appraise the quality of an institution.

Mr. Hoffe: Because it made no -- you know, I just did not measure the quality or was in no position, had no reason to, and indeed had been told that we are not to be concerned with the quality of these schools, and I hadn't heard ---

Senator Nunn: Were you told that you were not to be concerned about the quality of these schools? And if so, by whom?

Mr Hoffe: This was understood.

Senator Nunn: Understood in what way?

Mr. Hoffe: Understood by all senior, or all program officers.

Senator Nunn: That this was none of their business

Mr. Hoffe: That is correct.

Senator Nunn: How did you get that understanding, in writing or verbally?

Mr. Hoffe: That would have been verbal over the years in meetings in Washington.

ENSOR: Faced with such criticisms, U.S. Commissioner of Education Terrel Bell had nothing to say about the West Coast Schools allegations; he did have answers for the cries of mismanagement and poor accounting, however in a statement released during the hearings, The Office of Education said it is making "significant progress" in its efforts to clean up the guaranteed student loan program. Charges have been filed against nine schools and are pending against ten other schools and banks, the statement said. That's all very well, the Subcommittee Assistant Counsel Laverene Duffy said, but things could have been done to avert fraud and defaults several years ago.

Mr. Duffy: To summarize, Mr. Chairman, our inquiry reveals the following: Number One, Department of Health, Education and Welfare officials in Washington, D. C., and San Francisco were put on notice as early as June, 1973, that there was evidence of corrupt and questionable practices at West Coast Schools. But none of the officials seemed concerned enough to see to it that this evidence was checked out. Throughout this inquiry the subcommittee staff has been struck by the sloppy way HEW files were maintained, when files are maintained at all.

Accordingly, the Department should have the machinery in place to pursue leads that suggest corrupt or questionable practices. HEW's budget is larger than the Department of Defense's. Yet it is not properly equipped to conduct investigations into possible misuse of Federal dollars. HEW's response to the West

Coast Schools issue reveals that Department officials were not receptive to the possibility that, with the expenditure of billions of dollars a years there is a likelihood that fraud will be attempted.

As a final consideration, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that at the time these allegations of fraud and questionable practice surfaced in the summer of 1973, HEW's entire investigative staff consisted of one man. Since 1973, HEW has created a Division of Investigations and Security. As of July, 1975, this Division has only seven investigators.

Senator Nunn: When you say "one man" are you talking about the national level or at the regional level?

Mr. Duffy: I am talking across the board.

ENSOR: Help with security investigations may be on the way. The House approved money in mid November which would pay for thirty more positions in HEW's Office of Investigations and Security to guard against abuses in its over $140 billion dollars worth of programs.

There's also a good chance Congress will decide to ban proprietary schools like West Coast Schools incorporated from acting as lenders in the program. Senior House Republican Robert Michel of Illinois has introduced a bill to do just that of course the problem there is that plenty of private trade schools are honest, useful and well-run and they serve a lot of disadvantaged, Minority people.

Then there's the question of students not paying back their loans. Somewhere between 19 and 25 percent are now in default. Some in Congress think the program should be scrapped--but most agree that it should continue to make training and education possible for millions who couldn't otherwise afford it. So the question then is--what is default rate is acceptable?

Senate Education Subcommittee chairman Claiborne Pell has proposed a bill designed to cut down on defaults with new rules--including one that no student with a GSL loan can declare bankruptcy for five years after leaving his school. Commissioner Bell has asked Congress for more staff to deal with student aid.

Meanwhile, more scandals may emerge. Federal and State attorneys are still investigating alleged lawbreaking by Trade School Operators and HEW Collection Agents in Dallas, Texas, which hit the papers last April. The nation's largest home study school, Advanced School Incorporated of Chicago went bankrupt and closed down last May leaving seventy thousand students with unfinished courses and lending institutions with a hundred and fifty million dollars in guaranteed student loans to deal with. They are <u>also</u> under investigation.

Permanent investigations Subcommittee staffers say they know of at least three dozen of what they call "PROBLEM SCHOOLS", in different parts of the country.

For Options in Education, this is David Ensor.

(BUTTON)

MERROW: Child Abuse is a major problem in American Society, not simply in the schools. How many kids are being beaten violated or even killed, who is responsible, and what can be done about child abuse are the subjects of a 2-part report by my colleague Wendy Blair.

BLAIR: Three weeks ago people in Washington watched a mother appeal to the public on television news programs. Her four year-old boy, Shawn Abbey, was missiong. The last day Shawn was seen at his nursery school a few people noticed he had black eyes, but nobody reported it to anyone at the time. Then the boy was found--dead. He'd been beaten unconscious, a weight tied to his leg, and his body thrown off a bridge into the Potomac River. Although severely beaten, he died of drowning, the coroner said. Later his mother made a statement to police. She thought her son was already dead when she and her boyfriend threw him into the river.

MERROW: This story, which burned into our minds over several weeks, has made many of us really think about child abuse generally in this country and Wendy Blair is ready now with a two-part report this week and next. Child abuse is a tough subject to listen to, but we think it's very important.

BLAIR: Douglas Besharov doesn't know, and he directs the new National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. One of his jobs is to find out the national incidence of child abuse--because nobody else knows it either. Everyone I spoke to in preparing this program told me the same thing: that every big city in this country has its Shawn Abbey case. More now from Douglas Besharov.

D. Besharov: Because so much child abuse occurs behind closed doors and in the privacy of the home, we don't know how many children each year are abused or battered by their parents. We do know something about reported statistics and they alone are quite frightening. Last year, in 1974, over 500,000 children were reported as abused or neglected. We also know that as many as 2,000 children a year die at the hands of their parents. In some places it is one in fifty children that is abused or neglected. The national average looks like it is going to be something about one in one hundred. One percent of all children under 18 are abused or neglected by their parents.

BLAIR: Taken together, if this were a communicable disease we would say we have an epidemic on our hands.

BLAIR: An epidemic we don't know the size of. Reports--coming from hospitals, or relatives, or schools, are handled in many cities by a special social-service agency. But many cities, like the District of Columbia, let the police handle child abuse because they're the only ones on duty around the clock. Sgt. Robert Sequin, D.C. Police Youth Division, has worked in child abuse for some time.

Sequin: I think the worse are burn cases, cases where the child is burned by water, scalding water. We had one case where one child in the family died and the other one was still in the hospital because of burns, unexplained.

BLAIR: What did the parents do?

Sequin: In most cases of scalding, the explanation is that the child was being given a bath, the child was left for a minute and he turned the tap on.

BLAIR: Sometimes a parent throws boiling water in a baby's face to stop it crying. Or bangs a baby down HARD on its crib, so that the baby's head hits the wall, or the bedboard. Most infant deaths are from subdural haematomas--bleeding into the brain caused by a fractured skull.

Parents who do these things may be ignorant about some important facts about the way babies develop. They may be ignorant of certain important emotions--because of their own growing-up. They may be filled with self-hate, self-judging, frustration and anger. After a while that anger erupts. But they are people. They're not so hugely differnt from everybody else....Often they don't want to do what they do. It's hard to explain, but let someone who admits she abused her children begin.

Shirley: I don't want to hurt my kids. I don't want to yell at my kids and I don't want to scream and cuss my kids. I needed help.

I never had an idea that I was an abusive parent then.

It didn't start with my oldest daughter until she got ten or eleven months old, I think to the point where she was a responsibility. When she was a baby, change her diapers and feed her and make sure she is fed and dry. What was all it took. But as each day went by she had to be told "no" for this, "no" for that. "You can't do this. You can't do that." And I didn't have it. I really didn't. And she got away with murder is the only way to put it. She found out how to manipulate, how to get away with it, and it has been a battle ever since.

I hit my oldest daughter three or four times in the same spot, in the arm, in about ten minutes at different occasions, you know, between that time, and left a bruise on her. I

was so mad. What I should have done was sent her to her room and gotten her out of my way for a few minutes. And I got satisfaction out of it. And that scared me. This happened about three months ago.

BLAIR: More about this little girl and her mother later in the program. It was one of their neighbors who reported them to a social worker. Since the early studies of child abuse come from doctors, and more very young children are admitted to hospital emergency rooms, abuse and neglect in the school-aged child were thought to be less prevalent. But now that educators have started to be included in state reporting laws, school aged children now make up HALF of all reported child abuse cases. However it's still true that teachers are often not informed about what they can--and can't--do, according to Sue Besharov, a psychiatric social worker from schools in New York City.

S. Besharov: My name is Sue Besharov. I am a Psychiatric Social Worker. I was working in some schools in New York City. If a child seems extremely upset, withdrawn, has trouble relating, a teacher can see that before anyone else. But in the past I have noticed that often teachers have been administratively told not to get involved because the school just does not want to have that headache of being involved with social agencies, with the police. Often they have the feeling that it might not do any good anyway.

Sometimes teachers have had bad experiences. They have found child welfare workers unresponsive and feel that nothing happens and you go through a whole lot of trouble with no results. That makes them even more reluctant.

The other problem is teachers are often very frightened of confronting the parents at all about suspected child abuse or maltreatment because they fear that might make it worse for the children. I think it is very helpful for teachers if there is someone in the school they can talk to when they suspect child abuse, someone who is more of an expert, has more knowledge in this area like a guidance counselor or a social worker or psychologistor even a principal who is tuned into this kind of thing. Because a teacher with an isolated experience who does not have particular training in this area can be quite bewildered.

BLAIR: Psychiatric social worker Sue Besharov. Several school systems around the country have begun programs to end this bewilderment and I'll report on them next week.

Some people have told me that child abuse is as old as Cain and Abel, but our public awareness of it in the United States is only 100 years old. Dr. Vincent deFrancis, Children's Division Director of the AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION-which is a national association of child protective agencies--tells the story of the famous MARY ELLEN CASE. Dr. deFrancis talked to me on the phone from Denver.

Dr. DeFrancis: The first recorded protection of an abused child occured in 1874, in New York City. A child named Mary Ellen, a 9-year old child, was discovered by a church worker, a Mrs. Whittier, who found this child to be grossly physically abused. She was beaten. She was chained to her bed. She was fed bread and water. The day before she was discovered she had received a gash on her cheek from a blow with a pair of scissors. In her desire to help this child Mrs. Whittier was enormously frustrated by the fact that no resource, no agency in New York City gave her any hope with regard to rescuing or protecting this child. The police said "No crime is being committed. Parents have a right to discipline their children." She went to the prosecuting attorney who confirmed that. The prosecutor, however, added "Should this child die as a result of this abuse, we will have those parents into court on a manslaughter charge." Well, patently, this will be no help to Mary Ellen. While brewing about this, Mrs. Whittier finally hit upon a resolution of the problem. She went to a man by the name of Henry Bird who in 1866, had organized and created the first animal protective agency on this continent, the A.S.P.C.A., the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Henry Bird said, "But lady, this is not our field." She said, "I recognize that but are we not all members of the animal kingdom? Couldn't you do something on that premise?" He consulted counsel and counsel said, "Why not?" So the animal protective agency went out to rescue this child. She was found to be so emaciated, so ill, that she had to be carried out on a stretcher. She was brought into court. The foster parents with whom she lived were hailed into court and charged with cruelty to animals and they were convicted.

The furor created by this, the wires, the telegraph wires

carried this story all over the world, to think that in this enlightened period of 1874, we had laws to protect animals but no laws to protect children. The furor created by this brought about the enactment of laws in New York State, the first such laws in the entire world which recognized the rights of children, rights to protection against negligence and against abuse.

BLAIR: That was 100 years ago. In fact it wasn't till Dr. Henry Kemp of Denver did a study of children who came to his hospital's emergency room in the late 1950's and reported it to the American Academy of Paediatrics in 1961 using a new term: "THE BATTERED CHILD" to catch attention--it wasn't till then that many specific child abuse laws began to be passed. Dr. Annette Ficker, peadiatrician with the child protection team at Children's Hospital in D.C. explains the term.

Dr. Ficker: The battered child syndrome itself was coined by a radiologist who had a series of children who had head injuries. And he did x-rays on them and found that together with the head injury they had a new fracture and an old fracture. This was a battered child syndrome, more than one injury, multiple injuries, multiple fractures, old and new injuries. These things we look for. Children of course have accidents, lots of accidents. But when you see a child that has too many, seemingly accidents, you do have to ask yourself, is there some intent going on in that family to hurt this child?

BLAIR: Once the medical profession has found something that could be proved in court, child abuse laws followed fairly quickly during the 1960's. The law is complex. Child abuse is harm done to a child by someone in his own family--parents, or legal guardian or a sibling. The criminal code has sanctions against assault and murder, and in extreme cases parents guilty of abusing children will be prosecuted under criminal laws. But there are civil laws which allow the state to intervene in the family in order to protect a child--either to remove the child, temporarily or permanently from his parents care, or to allow social agencies connected with a city government or a court to go in and give that family practical help to relieve a crisis, so that the child will not be in danger in future. The laws are passed on the State level. Here's some legal history from James H. Lincoln, executive judge in Wayne County, Michigan.

Lincoln: At first there were no reporting laws. The medical profession knew very little about child abuse. And as they learned why, the courts gradually learned and finally there was a wave of reporting laws that swept the nation. I wrote the one for Michigan. I also went to Washington D.C., to help devise ideas, model laws and so forth with H.E.W. This dates back a decade ago.

There was in the sense, no uniformity on these laws. They differed. But all of them were zeroing in on what we called "severe child abuse", cases that involved fractured skulls, broken bones and severe child abuse cases. Of course the proofs of what constituted negligence as a whole in the courts, they don't have the same precision and diagnostic certainty as the proofs of the child physical abuse cases.

BLAIR: Judge Lincoln, let me just interject that the laws began fairly ---

Lincoln: Uniformily.

BLAIR: Fairly uniformily and fairly narrowly confined to physically recognizable battered child.

Lincoln: Yes.

BLAIR: And then began to broaden to include something called neglegect.

Lincoln: Yes. Now that is a recent movement and it was greatly accelerated by the Mondale Act which was a reporting act put through the Congress of the United States which is a come-on to get federal funds. And this broadened it so that child abuse is defined to mean anything such as mental injury to child. That could be a mother yelling at her child in the backyard to come in the house, any sort of neglect at all.

BLAIR: That so-called Mondale Act is really the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, which sets up a Washington Center to oversee a budget of 20 million dollars this year--25 million next--which it grants out to local groups under certain conditions, among them that the state have certain reporting laws and provide certain services--of which more later. What Judge Lincoln bridles at is the act's definition of abuse: quote "...child abuse and neglect means the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child..." Neglect may be hard to pin down in a court of law, but its devastating results are real.

BLAIR: Paediatrician Annette Ficker and anonymous mother Shirley flesh out more dimensions of this suffering.

Dr. Ficker: It may take the form of emotional abuse. And the danger is that such a child will grow up not feeling good about themselves. This is exactly one of the reasons why parents abuse children.

Shirley: I was abused as a child. I was cussed. I heard son-of-a-bitch. I know I was called God-damned so and so. And I had my head banged against the tile of the bathroom floor. It was really -- I mean I was 14 years old. Well, I am 30 years old and I feel like it has been this way for 30 years. I used to do things to get her angry. And I know why now, because I -- when my mother and father separated, my father was a god and still is to me in certain terms. And I blamed my mother all these years for the separation, the divorce. I couldn't talk to anybody about it. I had all these angry feelings inside of me and instead of being able to say, "hey mom, I am angry" I did little things. I'd leave dirty -- she hated dirty nylons, which is normal. I would leave dirty underwear under my mattress, everything to make her yell at me because that was the only time I got attention from my mother. And that is the same thing my children do.

Two years ago they were both very unhappy children and it looked it. They never smiled. They ran their mouths and got me angry to give them the attention that I couldn't give them. But they were very unhappy. My oldest daughter, Melissa, just started talking in school. She has been going to school for two years. She was in Head Start and kindergarten. She wouldn't talk.

Dr. Ficker: One mother told me "My child doesn't know his name. I keep calling him 'you bully', or 'you're no good'". But she never called him by his name. But that is all she was doing, fortunately, or that was enough. Because it dawned on her, my boy is not responding, he is not doing things a boy should do. It was because he was getting depressed over a period of time because he saw that his mother didn't love him.

BLAIR: And this is fully as much child abuse as the physical?

Dr. Ficker: It certainly is and can be just as harmful to the full development of a person because many children are depressed, and this brings up another point, depression in children is not as easy to identify as it is in adults but I really believe that there are many children who are depressed and it is because of the way the parents are treating them. They don't feel good about themselves. Things go wrong and they don't have enough self-confidence or self-esteem. They can't take too much frustration and they let it out on their children.

Shirley: I was made to feel I was very worthless, useless, I was no good. I have talked to my mother about this. I sort of have an understanding. I don't hate her anymore. I used to have a deep hatred for her. She feels that it was my fault because I was a belligerent child and if I got an extra hard spanking or anything it was my doings. She said the problem didn't start until, I think, back in 1952, when my mother and father separated. And it could be true. But I still feel that a lot of the anger was there before that. I was not a wanted child. I was a ten months -- my sister is only ten months older than me. Evidently my mother almost died giving birth. And I think this has a lot to do with it.

Dr. Ficker: So a child who is growing up with this emotional type of abuse and physical abuse, he is not going to think he is worthwhile either and grow up to be the same kind of person. And this is very sad. This is even sadder, maybe, than a child dying.

Shirley: I have been married before and have two boys and I haven't seen them since 1968. I finally realized now, just about two months ago, which has really bothered me, I did not want a family. I wanted children, my first boy, because I thought he

could love me the way my parents did not love me. When he couldn't, I neglected him. I didn't even know. I have lost half of my past. I can't even remember part of my good years yet. My second boy I did not want. So I had -- my kids were two years old and nine months old I think when my first husband and I separated. I really went downhill then. I am an alchoholic. I quit drinking ten months ago, pray to God never do again. I put on weight like crazy. I am trying to lose. I have been successful so far. I got married to my present husband now, which he is an abuser. He yells and screams. He doesn't think he has a problem but I have seen him lose control and I have told him this.

BLAIR: How was it that you chose as your second husband somebody who still had this problem?

Shirley: When I first met my present husband I was drinking, not too much, but enough to get high, if that is what you want to call it. And he drank and I think that is what drew us together, plus he needed me and I needed him. I never had an idea that he had a problem. He told me all through out my pregnancy of my first one, did I think he was going to be a good father. Looking back now, I should have known something was wrong. He comes from a family of 13. They were abused. They got beat with a belt and had salt put on it, you know that kind of thing.

BLAIR: You mean salt put on the bloody ---

Shirley: Yes, uh-huh. He has never done that to the kids but ---

BLAIR: You mean very cruel parents?

Shirley: On yeah. Well, I think the world of his grandmother. And his father died a couple of years ago from a massive stroke which was caused by alchoholism. I can't say they were cruel. They just didn't know any better and the mother was left for 15 years, all week long, to deal with, well 11 kids lived and the father was down here working so she had to deal with most of it, plus the drinking.

Dr. Ficker: In my experience at Children's, alchoholism is very often connected with severe physical abuse. Drug addiction, you often see the children failing to thrive or a child who is very neglected. We had an 18 month old little girl who weighed about 15 pounds. By that age she should have weighed 25, maybe even 30 pounds. She also was very very short for her age. She would just sit and stare. She had no expression on her face. This is exactly what her life was like, her mother. Failure to thrive, when there is no organic reason that is found. We do a lot of tests to find out if there is an organic reason like a kidney problem or a heart problem. When no reason like that is found it is usually because the mother is not stimulating the child enough. Maybe just puts it in the crib, will feed it, maybe not enough, but maybe enough. And yet this child will not grow. So it is a magic, almost, balance between this psychological life and the physical life. Because we can do a test of growth hormones on the child and find that the growth hormones, the hormone that makes us grow tall, is decreased in such children. But as soon as the child gets into a hospital and gets t.l.c., tender loving care, it is amazing, this growth hormone starts increasing.

BLAIR: Dr. Annette Ficker is associate professor of Paediatrics at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Shirley chairs a Parents Anonymous group in Virginia--we'll have more about PARENTS ANONYMOUS later.

That cycle of abuse--depression, self-hate, anger--really is like the Old Testment "sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation..." The Courts do as well as they can with these intangibles, according to Judge James H. Lincoln of Detroit.

BLAIR: Judge Lincoln, just let me just understand objection to the broadening of the abuse defenition.

Lincoln: I am for bringing the failure to thrive into court. I have heard literally thousands of neglect cases in the past 15 years that were not abuse cases. So I believe that the failure to thrive could be brought into court. Bring them in under neglect.

Let me give you one illustration that will show the difficulty that one gets into in handling, in defining neglect. I was teaching in law school a course in Juvenile Court Law. They were seniors. I took Carl Sandburg's books on Abraham Lincoln, his

first volume, and wrote up a neglect petition that alleged as neglect the conditions in Abraham Lincoln's home at the time he was born. I changed the name, date and place and made it appear as though it were a pending petition appearing in the Wayne County Juvenile Court and this is what the class thought it was. We had two attorneys appointed, pro and con, and two hours later a class of 16 law students placed Abraham Lincoln in a boarding home, declared him neglected. They would certainly have changed the course of history, would they not?

BLAIR: Douglas Besharov, director of the National Center of Child Abuse, pointed out to me that Abraham Lincoln's biographers have shown him to be a conflicted person who faught depression all his adult life.

D. Besharov: But I don't think that is what Judge Lincoln was talking about. It is hard to say what is and what isn't good child-rearing. And we have tried to talk about minimum objective degrees. of care. For example, a child who isn't bathed three weeks running is a child who needs some help. Make that six weeks. Children with rickets are children with rickets. You know there are thousands of children in Bed-Sty, New York, and I know that area well, who have heart conditions at age 15 because their parents fed them coke and potato chips from the time they were a year old. I don't care what you say, you know? That to me is child neglect or child abuse.

BLAIR: Maryanne Stein, attorney with the D.C. CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER, a private group working for needy children, explains that practically speaking the debate about what child abuse is irrelevant. It boils down to the power of the judge.

Stein: The definition of abuse is what the judge says it is. I think it is a problem. Judges need to acquaint themselves with the issues, not just the legal issues but also the social issues. The legal processes is only a step. It is only a facilitator. What does it facilitate? I think judges need to be more aware of how that system is being used. One of the things I found absolutely shocking was the dirth of statistics on the magnitude of the problem and what the pieces were. So that judges were becoming a part of something they really probably didn't know very well.

BLAIR: Next week we'll go into what services are facilitated by court proceedings.

Dr. David Gil, Professor of Social Policy at Brandeis University, has written a book, VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, in which he argues in part that child abuse can result from the policies of our social institutions just as much as from a parent hitting a child over the head with a baseball bat. Professor Gil says that the indirect violence we do children comes from the way we distribute food, health care, housing and education in America—unequally. The real perpetrators of this violence are institutions, but we don't see this because we narrow our focus too much.

Gil: In my view child abuse ought to include any act or any policy that interferes with the full and free development of a child, and irrespective of who is doing it and who is responsible for it. Now violence takes many forms. One form is to hit someone over the head with a baseball bat. But you may achieve worse results than that by preventing someone to get medical care when they are sick. You may achieve worse results by not feeding someone when they are hungry. Now we, for instance, have millions of mothers, expecting to give birth to children who are not eating what they need to eat to feed their own body and the growing body in their uterus.

Now, you may chose a different label for this -- and I don't care what you call it -- I call it structured violence, violence intrinsic to our social institutions; to the way we distribute food, to the way we distribute health care, to the way we distribute housing, to the way we distribute education. All these are results of our policies, the way we have arranged our society.

Now, we have millions of children who do not get what they need to develop fully as a result of our economic and political institutions. What you call it, I don't care. The result is that we have children who are handicapped, children whose brains do not develop for want of protein, who we then label retarded, children who grow up in constant frustration who we then, because of their angry acts, call delinquents.

This morning I heard that three children burned in a Pennsylvania correction institution. That is one way of correcting children. So you see, all these things, whether they are violent acts on a small scale like somebody hitting a child with his own hands or whether society, through its enormous scope of injustices deprives millions of our children, and their parents for that

matter, it depends how you want to see it.

To me what counts is the result. The result in both cases is a hurt, deprived human being.

BLAIR: And one such result is brought out by attorney Maryann Stein.

Stein: I found something very fantastic recently. I have been reading Helter Skelter, which is the book about Manson and the Tate and Labianca murders and several more. One chapter in there describes Manson's childhood and background. I found it very interesting that he started out as a neglected child. He spend a good deal of time in public facilities, training schools. as they were called, in I believe Wheeling, West Virginia, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Washington, D. C. And that is where he got his training and was, in essence, dehumanized.

Now he is obviously a gross example of what we are talking about. But in his personality, in some ways, not atypical of what happens to kids who are neglected and abused, not just by their families, but also by the system.

BLAIR: Our systems of dealing with child abuse--and not dealing with it--will be the subject of next week's program.

MERROW: I take it that Professor Gil feels that what's needed in order to get rid of child abuse and neglect is a total restructuring of society.

BLAIR: I'm afraid that's so. And next week we'll get into corporal punishment, John, because Gil, and others, feel that we actually teach violence to children, and that the recent Supreme Court ruling permitting corporal punishment in schools has a direct bearing on child abuse.

MERROW: Next week part two of Wendy Blair's report on Child Abuse next week will cover Corporal Punishment.

Three weeks from today we will be calling listeners to talk about the related issues of school discipline and child abuse. If you want us to call you send us a postcard with your name and telephone number. Send the postcard to Options in Education, 2025 M (as in mustard) Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

(BUTTON)

BLAIR: From time to time we will be profiling schools and colleges around the country, as we did two weeks ago when we visited a newly-desegregated school in Boston. Recently John Merrow spent the day in New York's Spanish Harlem, visiting the Experimental and Bilingual Institute there. Here is his report.

MERROW: Thanks, Wendy. The Experimental and Bilingual Institute or E.B.I., occupies the top 4 floors of a five-story walkup. The bright colors, fresh paint, and lively hum of student activity only partially obscure the buildings delapradated condition. Maxine Rodriguez Lisboa, the School Deputy Director, explains what EBI is trying to do.

MERROW: What is the Experimental and Bilingual Institute?

Rodriguez Lisboa: The Experimental and Bilingual Institute is an adult college feeder program, community based.

MERROW: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. There is a lot of language there. An adult, I got that. College, I can understand. Feeder, what do you mean "Feeder"?

Rodriguez Lisboa: Well, what we do is prepare students who eventually feed into the CUNY schools that we are affiliated with. In other words, they transfer with their credits from the Institute to those schools and continue their college education.

MERROW: A lot of people may not know what CUNY means.

Rodriguez Lisboa: CUNY is the City University System of New York. It is a tuition-free, city-funded university system here in New York City.

MERROW: You say your students are adults. What do they learn here that they did not learn in high school?

Rodriguez Lisboa: Well, we cater to,so to speak, the adult, Spanish-speaking person, the person who graduated from a school in Puerto Rico or in another Spanish-speaking country or from a school in New York City who has not, but still has not,obtained or become proficient enough in English to go right into the school. So, they would need to come to the Institute to prepare themselves better in dealing with those large impersonal college settings.

MERROW: How much does it cost a student to come here? I know a student gets 12 credits for the year's work completed successfully but what is the tuition?

Rodriguez Lisboa: We are a tuition-free institution. However we do charge a $35 registration fee. In addition to the 12 college credits and our remedial work, we have other services, the supportive services, our counseling, and our tutoring, our language laboratory, and the materials we ourselves have had to create and do ourselves and Xerox and translate and that kind of thing. So that, that fee doesn't even begin to cover.

MERROW: Well, let's talk about how you do cover the costs. Who's paying the freight?

Rodriguez Lisboa: Well, we have two major funding sources, FIPSE, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education from the Federal Government,has provided us with at least half of our operating budget. And the Model Cities administration here in New York City provides the other half. We have also been fortunate in receiving small grants from other sources, from the private sector, from banks, from foundations, et cetera.

MERROW: Now, I understand from what I have heard as I have been wandering around that you are under a unique kind of pressure to go from being a one-year school to become a two-year school. Explain why.

Rodriguez Lisboa: Well, it is a unique pressure from within. It is not to say that our funding sources push us into that necessarily. What it is, is that it is not enough being a college feeder program. We would like to become a community-based institution that grants degrees.

MERROW: You make it sound like it is a voluntary decision. But the perception I have from other conversations is that there are pressures that are pushing you that way.

Rodriguez Lisboa: Well, the pressure that is pushing us that way mainly is that there is no future for a college-feeder program.

MERROW: That is a pretty good sized pressure.

Rodriguez Lisboa: Exactly. The only way that we can continue to get money for an operating budget is if we become accredited. All of the funding sources will not recognize you if you don't grant a degree.

MERROW: Do you worry that becoming official, becoming legitimate will change the unique character of E.B.I.

Rodriguez Lisboa: A little bit. I think that one can only assume that if you have to go the route of becoming accredited and fitting a certain mold that there is a danger of becoming a carbon copy of what is all right out there. I think that what will keep us unique is the kind of faculty we have, that our community residents are sensative to what we seek to provide for our students. And our student body, the student body is not the typical kind of student that would go into a university. It is the older adult who comes in with deficiencies but great desires. So that, you know, can be a check for us.

MERROW: Maxine Rodriguez Lisboa, Deputy Director of EBI. Strong faith in education as a key to upward social and economic mobility was characteristic of the students I spoke with. Peter Plata a 24-year old high school dropout tells why he is attending EBI.

MERROW: I am talking now with a slightly older student. His name is Peter Plota. He is a student here at E.B.I. Peter, I am curious. Why are you coming here?

Plota: Well, I think I have wasted a lot of time. I am young but I feel like I am getting older and I had better do something as far as education is concerned because it is something I want to do and I have always wanted to do it.

MERROW: You sound as if you have kind of got things together and yet you are 24. How old were you when you dropped out?

Plota: I think I was like 16.

MERROW: What did you do in the intervening years between then and now?

Plota: I have worked. I have worked in about seven or eight different jobs. That is another thing that really got me back into school, the fact that I did finish some courses, I took Photography, the Time-Life, and I finished their course. I got a certificate from them. I worked in the field. But it wasn't what I wanted. For some reason or another I kept jumping from job to job

Finally I decided now, regardless of what happens, I have a part-time because you need money to get by. It is not much money but it allows me to study and it allows me to really attend school the way I want to. I am married. Of course there are responsibilities that I have there so that I have to have some kind of a job.

MERROW: Peter Plata, a student at the Experimental and Bilingual Institute. Since the City University of New York began guaranteeing admission to all city high school graduates in the fall of 1970 2/3s of the freshmen admitted to CUNY under the open admissions program have dropped out. EBI doesn't want that to happen to its graduates who go on to CUNY, which is why study skills is one of EBI's most important courses, as, Santiago Villa Fanye, a study skills teacher, explains.

MERROW: You are teaching Study Skills. What do you mean by study skills?

Villa Fanye: Well, specifically what we try to cover in the course are skills that would be essential for survival in college. We start out with giving a student kind of an idea of what a professor would expect of them in a class, what their responsibilities as students are. We also try to give the students an idea of what their professor's responsibilities to them as students are.

MERROW: Wait a minute, let me interupt. Shouldn't these students have gotten these skills in high school?

Villa Fanye: Well, they should have, but the fact is that if they went to school here, in New York City, most of them really were no given these skills in the sense that there is a very deliberate type of tracking system here and you have people who are put into an academic sequence where study skills are not so much a course by themselves, but they are all involved or, perhaps better said, they are given, only study skills are given to students as different parts of an English course or math skills or whatever.

MERROW: Do you suppose for middle class kids a lot of study skills are also acquired in the home?

Villa Fanye: Oh, very much, yes. I mean there is a very distinct advantage that a middle class child has. For instance, my nephew, okay, who could talk to me on a sophisticated level about, let's say this picture that was on television last year, Frankenstein. Now his father has a Ph. D. in English and his mother has a Masters degree in Counseling.

MERROW: How old is your nephew?

Villa Fanye: Well, he is six now. But he is exposed, you know, to all of these analytical type of conversations, of looking at different things and breaking it down to its component parts. And also, the level of the language in that home is very much sophisticated, you know.

MERROW: I noticed listening to you that you were telling them how reading breaks down into different component parts. But you were also telling them how many pages per week they might have to read and you seemed to be, maybe the word would be, "de-mystifying," telling them that some reading is more important than another is. Is that a part of your plan?

Villa Fanye: Yeah, very much, because I think one of the biggest problems that our students have is that they do have this very mystical conception of what college education is. The reason why I do that is because when I went back to school I was already 26. For many years I didn't go to college because I had this view that it was only a place for those of us who are most intelligent, you know, whatever. I found when I did go to school that there were people who were asking good intelligent questions and giving good intelligent answers. There were a lot of other people who were very much confused like myself.

So I think that this is essential because I think a lot of students find the idea of going to a college as a very informidable experience, something that is only for those who are very thoroughly prepared and this is not necessarily the case. So what I specifically try to do with my class is that I do try to clue people into what kind of experiences they will be encountering.

MERROW: In a way you are kind of treating college as if it is a subway and you are providing them a map of a subway and you are also telling them, you still have to get used to this subway. Eventually if you have a map, if you have never been on one,the first few rides are going to be kind of scary.

Villa Fanye: That is a very good analogy, yeah, precisely. What I try to do is, I make it very clear what kind of a process they are going to get into, what kind of difficulties they are going to encounter. But, at the same time I also am trying to drive home my point which is that this is a means to an end; you know, that you don't really just get hung up because "I wasn't able to succeed" or something else; but that you prepare yourself as best you can and go in there and do the very best you can. And generally, I think that works for most of the students.

MERROW: Santiago Villa Fanye, who teachers Study Skills. 125 EBI students have gone on to CUNY. Exact records are not kept, but fewer than 10 have dropped out, according to EBI. Earlier, EBI's Deputy Director, Maxine Rodriguez Lisboa, mentioned the forces pressuring EBI to become an accredited 2 year institution. She has strong views about the Institute's future.

MERROW: It will be interesting to see what happens to E.B.I. in the next couple of years as move with the forces of change. What do you expect?

Rodriguez Lisboa: I expect that we will become an accredited college in East Harlem, the first one of its kind, within the next five years. You watch us.

MERROW: We will. Thanks a lot.

BLAIR: That's a look at the Experimental and Blingual Institute in New York City's Spanish Harlem. Next week we will visit the Community College of Vermont, an interesting institution that has no campus, no building of its own, and no permanent faculty.

(TEASE)

Mrs. Jordan: So after I have set these thirds, I will set fifths, another series of thirds, more fifths, and I will check them against each other. There is a minor third checking against a sixth. They should both be about the same. These do not, by the way. That is too fast. It is faster than this one. This is so fast it is a little bit harsh, which means I had better bring it in.

Mr. Eaton, I can remember to this day, took me over to a piano, put the tuning hammer in my hand and said "See, here is how the pins turn. Make this string sound just like that string. Put that pin back so that the two of them sound alike." I am not sure I am quoting exactly, but anyway, my first reaction was, oh, oh, I will never be able to do this. This was all in my head of course, Oh no, I will never be able to do it. But I kept at it.

BLAIR: That's a piano-tuner, explaining her art, we're interested in how Americans are learning to do the things they do, whether it is driving a school bus, flying a hang glider

Tuning a piano. Ken Meyers watched, listened and asked questions as Ruth Ann Jordan tuned a grand piano.

(Music playing.)

Mrs. J: Well, I have always loved pianos. I think a piano is the finest thing man has ever created.

Meyers: Do you play the piano?

Mrs. Jordan: Well, I took lessons only briefly as a teenager so that I can sit down and amuse myself but nobody else is amused by it.

Meyers: Now, what about your training? How does one begin to learn the art of tuning a piano?

Mrs. Jordan: Well, there are so few schools in the country that if you don't live in the area you haven't got much chance of getting a school-type training. There are only four or five. There are a couple of correspondence schools which I didn't know about, which are pretty good, but you still need the help of an individual to bring you along.

They way I got started is I went to the Yellow Pages and began to make phone calls. I had bought an old upright and they had tuned it for me once and I didn't like the tuning. And at the time I had bought it I had asked them if they would consider teaching tuning. "Oh, no, no, no, we are too busy. We don't teach anything." So when it came time to tune it again and I talked it over with my husband and came forward with my ideas, "This is the time I can start to learn now." Then I called the Piano Technician Skills and they put me in touch with Mr. Wendell Eaton. And I made an appointment with him and talked it over with him and he took me seriously for which I was tremendously grateful. And I began to study with him. And he has taught me everything I know about pianos. He himself is a master technician but also a rebuilder. He will be the one who will rebuild my piano.

Meyers: Uh-huh.

Mrs. Jordan: That is a tremendous task, by the way rebuilding an entire piano.

Meyers: I can imagine.

Mrs. Jordan: And it takes many many years to perfect your skills. You take your tuning fork, you match your string to the sound of that fork and you make, then you go down to the octave. Would you like to hear? Now I will use a C fork and I will set my pitch there and then I will set the octave. After I have done that, I set, by a series of thirds and fifths and fourths, I will set a pattern. That is my first set of thirds.

Meyers: You start with a third?

Mrs. Jordan: I start with a third. Well, I start with a series of thirds, let me put it that way. These thirds, C to E, E to G sharp, G sharp to C. (music playing)

Meyers: Now this hammer, what is this called, the end of the hammer?

Mrs. Jordan: This is the tip or the head.

Meyers: And you took a tip off earlier and put a new tip on. Why is that?

Mrs. Jordan: I like an angle tip for a grand piano. Without it my hammer sits too flat. This way it raises it up a little. It is easier to handle.

Meyers: And that is also a matter of personal taste?

Mrs. Jordan: Yeah, although people do that for the grand piano. Very often these bars, as you see here, the plate, will get in the way and unless the hammer is raised up, the handle is raised up some, you will be knocking on it. Many of them are high.

Meyers: Now what about preventive care for pianos? How can one take care of a piano so as to keep it from falling out too far?

Mrs. Jordan: Well, regular tuning is the answer.

Meyers: How often would that regular be?

Mrs. Jordan: Well, when you have a brand new piano you should tune it about four times a year for the first year or perhaps two, then every six months.

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